



**SENATOR**

# Mary Margaret Haugen

E-Newsletter - 10th District

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**10th Legislative District**

**Jan. 9, 2009**

## **HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

Everyone I know gets excited at the prospect of a New Year, but for me January is even more exciting because it means it's time for me to begin another session representing the people of our community in the state Legislature.

We officially reconvene on Monday, Jan. 12, but I've already been working in Olympia the past week to get a jump on the issues that many of you have told me are important to our communities. The Legislature has some heavy lifting to do this year to help Washington businesses get back on track, to make sure our communities remain safe, to continue providing a good education for our children, and to maintain the public services that many families rely on during tough times like these.

My colleagues and I will work hard to address and solve the challenges that lay ahead. In the meantime, please accept my wishes for a happy & prosperous new year!

## **OFF & RUNNING**

The Legislature doesn't convene until next week, but there's no time to waste given the difficult times facing our state and nation.

Once again, I have been chosen to chair the [Senate Transportation Committee](#) and to continue my service on the [Senate Rules Committee](#).

Meanwhile, I am excited to be a new member of the [Senate Agriculture and Rural Economic Development Committee](#). Farming and small business activities are a vital part of our state economy, and define the quality of life in our rural communities. I'm looking forward to working with members of our agricultural and small business communities as a new member of this important committee.

I've gotten a head start by putting legislative staffers to work on plans to strengthen our economy, increase educational opportunities for our students, and improve transportation in our state. We've already prepared several bills for consideration when the Legislature convenes on Monday so that we can hit the ground running from day one. I will highlight some of these bills in future newsletters.

Of course, my most important job in the Legislature will be representing the people of the 10<sup>th</sup> Legislative District, and I'll once again be sending these regular E-News updates to keep you aware of what I'm doing on your behalf.

## **OLD DOGS LEARN NEW TRICKS**

Legislative staff has been working hard to find ways to make sure that news about what's happening in the Legislature is more accessible to the people who matter the most – the people we are elected to represent.

When I was first elected, I never imagined that I'd be able to send updates like this directly to the people I represent over the Internet – and this year I'm determined to go a few steps further.

This year, my web site has been updated with some exciting new features that I'll be using to keep you up to date about what's happening here in Olympia – I'll be posting tidbits of info on my new blog whenever I get a chance, and you'll be able to subscribe to my podcast so you can get news as soon as it's available.

Please take a moment to [visit my updated website](#).

## **FERRIES**

Although our state has a part-time Legislature, my position as the chair of the Senate Transportation Committee involves year-round meetings to discuss a wide variety of issues.

This week I participated in a meeting of the [Joint Transportation Committee](#) where we heard a series of presentations from the Ferry Policy Group.

The [agenda](#) included a summary of the Ferry Policy Group Study, a discussion of Washington State Ferries' (WSF) long-range plan, and the Governor's proposed ferry budget. Summaries of many of the documents generated by these groups are available online [here](#), and you can even watch a video of the meeting on TVW's website [here](#).

The Ferry Policy Group has developed two different plans for the future of Washington State Ferries, and both involve drastic changes to the way WSF does business in the future.

The bottom line is that there are some major changes in store for the way Washington State Ferries provides services to communities around the Puget Sound, but this is just the first step in deciding what WSF will look like over the course of the next generation. These options are only drafts; the legislature will have the final decision on what our ferry service will look like over the next few years.

As both the Chair of the Senate Transportation Committee and someone who represents communities that depend on safe and reliable ferry service, I am committed to working to maintain the highest level of service possible without drastically raising ferry fares.

If you are interested in the long-term viability of Washington State Ferries, I encourage you to check out the [WSDOT Ferries Division Draft Long Range Plan](#). It's a bit long and heavy in detail, so I recommend starting with the [Executive Summary](#) to get an overview of where we are in what I'm sure will be a long discussion about the future of ferry service on the Puget Sound.

## **DISTRICT OFFICE CLOSED – BUT WE'RE STILL HERE TO HELP**

My district office in Oak Harbor will be closed while the Legislature is in session so that my staff can focus on our work in Olympia, but I will re-open the Oak Harbor office after the Legislature adjourns in late April.

In the meantime, my executive assistant Nova Gattman, legislative assistant Gina Bull and intern Beau Perschbacher are eager to provide constituent services to the people of our community. They're probably some of the busiest people in Olympia — but they're also very good at what they do.

Please don't hesitate to contact us with questions or concerns, whether they involve bills before the Legislature or topics you feel are being overlooked. If you have a concern, I want to hear it.

You can reach me by [e-mail](#) or call my office in Olympia at **360-786-7618** with your questions or comments at any time.

Until next week — Take Care!

Thank you for reading my email newsletter. I appreciate your interest in the legislative process. If at any time you decide you no longer wish to receive updates from me, please go to <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/subscriptions/member.aspx?member=haugenm> to remove your name from the list.

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